CLAIMS

1. A dry fractionation method for fat which comprises the steps of: fractionating a raw material fat into a crystalline fraction (F) and a liquid fraction (L); melting a part of the crystalline fraction (F) by raising the temperature; and subjecting the fraction (F) to solid/liquid separation.

2. The fractionation method according to claim 1, wherein the liquid fraction (L) is further fractionated into a crystalline fraction (LF) and a liquid fraction (LL), followed by partially melting the crystalline fraction (LF) by raising the temperature, and subjecting the fraction (LF) to solid/liquid separation.

3. The fractionation method according to claim 2, wherein the liquid fraction (FL) obtained from the F-fraction is mixed with a crystalline fraction (LFF) obtained from the LF-fraction to prepare a medium-melting point fraction.

4. The fractionation method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein, after melting a part of the F-fraction or a part of the LF-fraction by raising the temperature and before subjecting the fraction to solid/liquid separation, the fraction is subjected to a temperature-lowering treatment.

5. The fractionation method according to claim 4,

wherein temperature-raising and temperature-lowering treatments and, if necessary, collection of the crystalline fraction are repeated.

6. The fractionation method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the weight ratio of the crystalline fraction to the liquid fraction after fractionation or solid/liquid separation in each step is 8:2 to 2:8.

7. The fractionation method according to claim 6, wherein the weight ratio of the crystalline fraction to the liquid fraction is 7:3 to 3:7.

8. The fractionation method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the proportion of the liquid component remaining in the crystalline fraction obtained in each step is 15% by weight or less at a fractionation temperature.

9. The fractionation method according to claim 8, wherein the proportion of the liquid component remaining in the crystalline fraction obtained in each step is 10% by weight or less at a fractionation temperature.

10. The fractionation method according to claim 1, wherein the crystalline fraction (F) contains G2U and glycerides having a higher melting point than G2U, wherein G denotes a saturated or trans-fatty acid residue, U denotes a cis-unsaturated fatty acid residue, and G2U denotes a triglyceride having two G residues and one U residue.

11. The fractionation method according to claim 1 or 10, wherein the crystalline fraction (F) is that obtained by subjecting a raw material fat containing G2U and GU2 to crystallization and solid/liquid separation to fractionate it into a crystalline fraction (F) in which G2U is concentrated and a liquid fraction (L) in which GU2 is concentrated, where G denotes a saturated or trans-fatty acid residue, U denotes a cis-unsaturated fatty acid residue, and G2U denotes a triglyceride having two G residues and one U residue.

12. The fractionation method according to claim 10 or 11, wherein G2U is 1,3-di-saturated-2-unsaturated triglycerides.

13. The fractionation method according to claim 12, wherein the saturated and unsaturated fatty acid residues have 16 to 22 carbon atoms.

14. The fractionation method according to claim 1 or 11, wherein the raw material fat is a vegetable butter, an interesterified fat or a fractionated crystalline fraction thereof, or an isomerization hydrogenated fat.

15. The fractionation method according to claim 1 or 11, wherein the raw material fat is an isomerization hydrogenated fat having a trans acid content of 30% or more.